
Judiciary Committee

SJM 8012

Brief Description: Urging adoption of a treaty fighting discrimination against women.

Sponsors: Senators Fraser, Kohl-Welles, Prentice, Fairley, Berkey, Franklin, Regala, Marr, Shin, Eide, Kastama, Murray, Haugen, Oemig, McDermott and Kline.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Urges the U.S. Senate to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.
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Hearing Date: 3/23/09

Staff: Kate Moeur White (786-5793) and Edie Adams (786-7180)

Background:

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is an international convention that addresses women's access to, and equal opportunities in, political and public life, education, health, and employment. The CEDAW was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979. Since that time it has been ratified by 185 nations.

Member nations to the CEDAW commit to eliminating all forms of discrimination against women by taking measures to incorporate the principle of equality of men and women in a nation's legal system, abolishing discriminatory laws, adopting laws prohibiting the discrimination of women, and establishing tribunals and other public institutions to ensure effective protection of women against discrimination. Signatory nations are required to submit a progress report once every four years detailing steps that have been taken to fulfill the CEDAW commitments.

The CEDAW defines "discrimination against women" as "any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of

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equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field."

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (Committee) has been mandated by the Convention to review progress reports submitted by member nations and make general recommendations. The committee also considers individual complaints from nations that have opted to participate in the Optional Protocol treaty authorizing the Committee to review complaints alleging violations of their rights under the CEDAW. The Committee is currently comprised of 22 experts on women's issues from 22 different countries.

Summary of Bill:

The Legislature urges President Barack Obama, the U.S. Congress, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis to place the CEDAW in the highest category of priority in order to accelerate the treaty's passage by the U.S. Senate and ratification by the United States.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.